THE ROLE OF POWER IN EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWERSHIP: THE ALBANIAN CASE

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Abstract

The selected topic being treated in this paper is “The Role of Power in Effective Leadership and Followership”. This topic is actually very little studied in the context of Albania and we judge that literature is not enough, for this reason we considered it appropriate for further research. This paper analyzes the use of power by leaders, the role it plays in effective leadership, and since the power is situational we intend to learn more about cases and situations where it is used. Also what is interesting is that this paper devotes a large space and makes part of it the power exerted by followers, because it is often perceived that power is possessed only by leaders. We will examine the role of followers and some main assumptions regarding their use of power. Some central questions that are raised in this paper and which we intend to give a response at the end are: What is the role of power in effective leadership and followership? What kind of power is used more in the Albanian context and why?

Keywords: leadership, followers, power, effectivity, empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

It is spoken very little about the use of power by the leaders either in administrative and political aspect. The studies carried out are insufficient for an important concept like power. Many scholars elaborate on the different theories of power, but in fact there are very few of those who throw light on the concrete application of power in certain social contexts. So through this paper is intended to fill a gap in current knowledge. Power is a complex topic and because of this in writing on power exist difficulties in maintaining a clear line of argument. Except that you have to be very precise in the use of language there is also a different requirement that the wording should be cross-linked with each other.

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The approach that we followed in order to interpret power in a more objective manner was through empirical research. As interested researchers in organizational analysis we judge as very important the study of the role of power to Albanian leaders. Power is a very little discussed topic openly in the workplace. Certainly among each other employees find it easier to talk about power, who has it, is it centralized or not, is it misused or not. We, as researchers wanted to be a voice that would highlight the reality of power usage in organizations. Moreover for us it was a challenge exploring this reality in our country, given that in the past we have inherited the shadow of an authoritarian leadership, for which you can not talk easily, you can not express what you think but you just have to humble yourself and obey.

Power is a tool used every day in organizations, and moreover organizations would not exist without power relations. To have things done leaders need to influence others. This means that power is a very important tool in achieving organizational goals and objectives. Leaders must recognize their power, must know how to use it effectively and how to precede its positive or negative effects. By learning how power operates in organizations, you will be better able to use that knowledge to become a more effective leader (Lunenburg, 2012).

One of the goals of this paper has been to describe the distribution of power as the economy describes the distribution of wealth and income. But this analysis is difficult because power is a multidimensional concept and for this reason it is difficult to be measured and to determine its amount. Although the importance of a good leader can not be denied, followers also play an equally important role in the success of any group or organization (Curphy & Roellig). For this reason, our goal is to look at the other side of the coin. For us it is important to identify followers perceptions about their power, which base of power do they mostly use, what do they need in order to be more effective and how they judge the power used by their leaders. We have attempted to measure the distribution of power in 30 companies in our country (Albania), taking empirical data on how much power do the leaders have (leaders deriving from the role of managers) and how powerful are the followers. In fact, respondents were asked to give their judgment about how powerful they think they are in their organization. Then we analyzed the data and also considered other influencing variables. Leaders are diverse and appear in various types. When this study attempts to study the power of leadership, it refers leaders that derive from the role of manager. Certainly leadership in organizations is exercised by managers. But we are aware that leaders can derive also by other roles than that of the manager. In a company or organization can be present, for example, hidden leaders but the measurement or distribution of their power is difficult to be identified. Due to these difficulties, the focus will be narrowed and here are studied leaders who are such because of their formal position in their organization.
Raised hypotheses that this paper will try to test are:

- There is a notable correlation between the power that an individual believes he has at work and her/his hierarchical level in his/her organization.

- It is likely that in Albanian businesses power is concentrated in the hands of a few selected individuals.

- There does not exist a general organizational climate that encourages delegation.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Understanding the concepts we judge that it is of utmost importance. In everyday life we use so many terms often interchangeable with each other without knowing that each of them has an essential difference from the other and actually we are not using the right term. Socrates, the famous philosopher of ancient Greek stated that "the beginning of wisdom is a definition of terms" (Trump, 2009). Regarding the meaning and use of terms like power and leadership in the language of our daily life and in different disciplines, there are taxonomic difficulties and there is not a generally accepted understanding either from researchers or from the wider community of people. These terms carry a variety of connotations, creating uncertainty, confusion and what is meant is vague and complex.

**Power, Leadership and Followers**

What is power? Power can be defined as “the ability to marshal human, informational, or material resources to get something done” (Rees & Porter, 2008). Power is the opportunity to build, to create, to nudge history in a different direction (Pfeffer, 1992). Another influential definition is given by R. Dahl: “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (Bass, 2008). Power is something concrete that any individual can possess. Power can be possessed by all people in the organization and not necessarily only by those who possess authority. It can be distributed to all hierarchical levels and can be exercised upward, downward or horizontally. Power can affect a set of decisions in the organization. As organizations become more global, individuals must lead and manage around the world. Their teams are dispersed, and they often have to lead using influence rather than the formal unilateral decision-making authority used in days past (Bal, 2008). Frequently people perceive power with a negative connotation.

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4 Raised hypotheses are independent of each other.
because they connect it with concepts like punishment, domination, and control.
David C. McClelland (1975) has observed: “In American society in general, individuals are proud of having a high need to achieve, but dislike being told they have a high need for power”. In our opinion power in itself is neither good nor bad. But it is precisely its way of using what determines whether it is functional or dysfunctional (harmful). However there is also a positive face of power usage, which contributes in achieving individual, group, and organizational goals and objectives. When power is used in an ethical way for fair purposes there is nothing wrong with the definition that it carries. Effective leadership is not based on having power, but rather on how the leader uses the power (Sims, 2002).

Leadership is studied in a variety of contexts, in almost all forms of social organization, ranging from nation, army, business, etc. Many different theories have been posited about leaders since the time of Plato and Aristotle, whether they are born or created by a number of factors and psychosocial circumstances. Leaders are products of their time, environment, and their followers. “Leadership can be better understood as a phenomenon constructed in minds and eyes of the audience, as much as in the deeds and character of the observed leader”(Sinclair, 1998). Leadership can not be understood without followers. Follower’s inexistence implies simultaneously leader’s inexistence. As Kelley (1992, p 12) points out “Without his armies Napoleon was just a man with grandiose ambitions”. This makes us understand that leadership is a group phenomenon. Follower is not a term that implies weakness or a term that carries a negative connotation, but rather it is a prerequisite that allows leadership to exist. We can find followers anywhere. Followers can be embodied in many ways: employees, constituents, stakeholders, or just individuals who believe in a cause (Ricketts, 2009).

Leadership and power are two closely related concepts. Power has played an important role in leadership practices. Leadership means power. We think that leadership may not be conceived without power. While an individual can exercise power without being a leader, an individual may not be a leader without power. Leadership is the exercise of power; therefore leaders must develop the proper bases of organizational power in order to use it effectively and efficiently in influencing others. Scholars such as French and Raven, Kruglanski, Hersey and Marshall Goldsmith suggested that there are seven different bases of power: (Daugherty & Williams, 2009).

- Legitimate/ Position Power; Expertise Power; Relationship Power; Informational Power; Referent Power; Coercive Power; Reward Power.

Followers have an equally important role in the success of the organization. Both of these roles can be active (Hollander, 1992) which means that there is a mutual influence. Leaders and followers influence each other, and both of them can
possess power. The dynamics of leadership and followers is the same. Those who
can lead in some cases may follow in some other cases. Most managers play both
roles. (Kelley, 1988) Leadership is a reciprocal relationship, where followers play an
active role, at the same time they influence and are influenced by leaders. It is often
perceived that power is possessed only by leaders. Scholars have found that power is
a function of leaders, followers, and situations. In other words, power is a function
of the relationship. According to Foucault power must be analyzed as something that
circulates (Scott & Hirschkind, 2006). Today it is possessed by you but tomorrow it
may be in the hands of others. Power is exercised within the network and in this
network individuals not only circulate but also they move continuously
from the position of one who suffers the power, in that of one who exercises it
(Foucault, 2009).

Leadership, Followers and their Power in Albanian Reality

For years in the Albanian reality the term "leadership" had a restricted use
and referred only to the political leadership. In fact even nowadays we still have this
deficiency inherited from the past. If you talk about a leader, in our country people’s
minds go to political leaders, not to business leaders. If for any reason of study an
interested person would look for publications, books or search on internet for data
on the Albanian business leaders, unfortunately, he/she will find very little, as little as
it can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The universities have only recently
begun to offer programs on 'Leadership', seeing it in the organizational context.

Concurrently, if we look at the usage of the term "manager" we will notice
that it has been unknown in job titles for years during the dictatorial system. In those
years there was a lack of the term that would really implicate a proper definition of
an individual that was engaged in functions such as planning, organizing, controlling
and directing. What mostly could be heard was the use of such terms as chief
engineer, charge nurse which had a traditional connotation. And of course this
deficiency is rooted prior to 1990.

Management is influenced by some particular dimensions of the external
environment. In our country the management system has some special
characteristics. Some of the dimensions that influence and shape these characteristics
are cultural system, economic system, socio-political context, etc. Our country was in
fact the last place among the countries of Eastern Europe that ended the communist
regime. The collapse of the communist system was also the collapse of the planned
economy. From there we began the road toward a market economy. Many people
with the "hidden spirit" of entrepreneurs started business activity without proper
education, without qualifications or required experience. According to Ronald
Inglehart’s researches (1999) result that “an individual’s priorities reflect the
socioeconomic environment. Albanians were very poor. They had no private property as the system obscured those norms that had to do with private property issues. It was therefore expected that at the beginning of transition Albanian individuals aspired to improve their economic situation for a higher economic prosperity and needed to show that entrepreneurial spirit. Businesses were intuitive and did not emerge as a result of analyzing or studying the environment in which they would operate. Due to long isolation, young entrepreneurs had no knowledge acquired from other countries. Everything was unknown; an equation with several unknowns and everything should be redesigned and relearned from the beginning.

Cultural norms imposed by the communist regime significantly affected the cultural formation of Albanians. Albanian society had a hierarchical structuring. The whole organizing had a hierarchical nature. Political leader, the leader of the first level, was the one who had power, his party ruled society. This was the appearance of power that people faced, and it was the structure of the organization that they knew. So there is no wonder that it was implemented and in business. The leader was seen as a symbol of authority and domination, all other individuals (followers) were only executants of orders, and they had no power and should see themselves as worthless before the system and organization.

With the democratic climate in the early 90's, many cultural norms dictated by the regime were overshadowed. The owner of the business (at the same time the manager) had to manage the business in a totally different situation. Most of the businesses were managed by owners and their relatives. This has affected the organization and management. Nowadays the Albanian business is dominated by micro-enterprises and their organizational structuring is simple (Llaci, 2010). According to INSTAT (2012) in Albanian economy operate about 104275 private businesses. The main part of businesses operate in the services sector, specifically there are about 88026 producers of services and a significant part operate in the trade sector, specifically about 45273 businesses. (INSTAT, 2012) For a relatively new economy and all the time in transition, there is a great necessity and need for effective leadership. The business leader is mainly a self-made creature that goes ahead by intuition.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Our intention was neither to verify nor to falsify the existed theories; we wanted to make a deep exploration of the usage of power in Albanian companies. There are various techniques used to realize this research study. In order to have a deep investigation and an exploratory study we intertwined different techniques with each other, such as literature review and survey. We used primary and secondary sources. As secondary sources we used all possible sources of contemporary theoretical literature of Albanian and foreign authors, articles in the press and documents from the internet. As primary data source, a survey of 200 respondents of
different ages in 30 different companies in the city of Tirana was conducted. The field research began on 01 October 2012 and ended on 01 December 2012. Some of the questions were borrowed from the survey carried out by the Centre for Creative Leadership in the U.S. based on the project “The Ideas2Action”. It is considered good practice and also recommended to borrow a questionnaire that has passed its trials and was accepted by the scientific community. This is because for them it can be said that they already meet the criteria of reliability and validity of measurement (Kocani, 2006). The questionnaire contained 15 standardized questions.

Theoretical population consisted of individuals in role of leaders and followers. We recall here the pact that this paper has done from the beginning: we studied leaders that derive from the role of manager. This study is based on a sample of 100 leaders and 100 followers. We used a random sampling. We used a sampling that does not identify respondents, in order not to reduce the reliability and validity of the data. Primary data collected through the survey, were processed through SPSS 16 statistical program to find possible statistical links of variables taken into consideration. Hypothesis will be tested through Chi-square ($\chi^2$) test.

Another supplementary way used to explain the role of power in effective leadership and followership was casual observation on behavioral models of leaders and followers.

Limitations

We are quite aware that this study is not a complete analysis and contains restrictions. The number of units of analysis may prevent the extraction of generalizations. Another limiting factor is the time available to conduct surveys. The study was concentrated only in medium and large enterprises in Tirana city. We did not have real opportunities to extend the sampling to others cities of Albania.

Another problem may be insincere responses from respondents. Because they may be afraid to say the truth if their leaders misused power. Speaking about the power of your boss is not always easy. Most people do not talk about power openly.

DATA ANALYSIS

From the synthesis of research results in business companies in the city of Tirana, was noted that the typical respondent in the category of leaders was a male (54 percent), between the age of 31-40 years old (70 percent). Typical respondent in the category of followers was a female (59 percent), between the ages of 21-30 years
old (67 percent). This fact demonstrates that even in private companies men are mostly those who lead, who give orders while women are mostly those who follow.

The perception of power is a central feature that characterizes our lives. There is practical evidence that there is a notable correlation between power and hierarchical vertical dimension. This is evidenced by the answers given by survey respondents. We asked them to rate their power at work. 93 percent of the leaders surveyed rated themselves as being moderately to extremely powerful at work, while 76 percent of the followers surveyed rated themselves as being not at all powerful to moderately powerful. In order to pick out the correlation coefficient we analyzed the variable of the amount of power that the respondents perceived they had with the variable of the position that they hold, and resulted that the coefficient of Pearson's R was -0.802 and the significance was .000. The statistical level is accepted at the quota of p < .05. According to table 1, the observed statistics of chi – square test 1,722, with freedom degree 9, proving that the hierarchical position affects the amount of power, since the security level .000 is lower than 0.05. What does this tell us? Who has influence and power is determined by where the individual is positioned within the institutional structure. The correlation is very strong which means that this relationship is unlikely to occur by chance but it really exists in the population. The result is representative, highly significant and it is a positive test for our first hypothesis. So we can conclude that there is a difference between the power of leaders and the power of followers in the population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Chi-Square Tests</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
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<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 2 cells (10.0%) have expected counts less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symmetric Measures</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Asymp. Std. Error</th>
<th>Approx. T</th>
<th>Approx. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interval by Interval Pearson's R</td>
<td>-0.802</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>-18.910</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinal by Ordinal Spearman Correlation</td>
<td>-0.813</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>-18.641</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Correlation: 0.8 strong, 0.6-0.8 moderate, 0.3-0.5 not bad, less than 0.3 weak.
6 Significance (, .000) means that the chance is less than 1 in 1000. There is so little chance.
In surveyed companies the power is not distributed at all levels. Only 44 percent of the leaders surveyed and 21 percent of the followers surveyed believed that their organization empowers people at all levels. The majority of respondents in each category believed the opposite: power is concentrated in the hands of a few select individuals. According to table 2, the observed statistics of chi–square test is 12,057 with freedom degree 1. Since the significance ,001 is lower than ,05 we can conclude that this is a positive test for our second hypothesis, so our hypothesis is proven. We can say that power is centralized in the hands of a few executives in Albanian companies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Power</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tab2</th>
<th>Chi-Square Tests</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>12.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>11.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>12.255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher’s Exact Test</td>
<td>11.007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

56 percent of the leaders surveyed and 71 percent of the followers surveyed believed that “there does not exist a general organizational climate that encourages delegation”. According to table 3, the observed statistics of chi–square test is 4,854 with freedom degree 1. Since the significance ,029 is lower than ,05 the third hypothesis is proven. How can this be explained in the context of Albania? In our opinion, this may result from various reasons. The first reason may be related to the
historical development of these companies. Many Albanian companies have grown following the formal way of their evolution. In small businesses owner-manager has a legitimate power imposed by private property. There is a centralization of decision-making process. Secondly, it is likely that the Albanians’ preference for avoiding uncertainty and risk may be a convincing argument for this phenomenon. Albania scores 70 (Wohlfahrtstaetter, 2012) on the uncertainty avoidance dimension. Our society has a low level of tolerance for uncertainty and risk. This owner-manager is reluctant to delegate authority to his subordinates as a result of fear of losing power and at the same time does not allow others to manage its business (except his relatives) because he considers both of them as foreign and unreliable. Thus Albanian managers tend to control everything, to avoid failure and the unexpected.

Through our survey we intended to understand more about the power in the Albanian context. There is a consensus between leaders and followers regarding the statement “my organization teaches its leaders how to use their power”. The majority of respondents said that leaders had participated in the training courses in order to learn more about power sources and their effective use. We have good news about the way that top leaders use their power. Nearly 63 percent of followers and 70 percent of leaders believe that power is not misused.

What kind of power is used more in the Albanian context and why? Leaders and followers use different power bases. The top three most frequently sources of power used by leaders are: the power of expertise (98 percent agreement), legitimate power and the power of charisma (88 percent agreement), and the power of relationships (85 percent agreement). What about the followers? The top three most frequently sources of power used by them are: the power of charisma (92 percent agreement), the power of expertise (88 percent agreement), and the power of information (75 percent agreement). How can we translate these results? The possession and demonstration of expertise to show what a leader can do, is important for Albanian leader. Being recognized as an expert in a particular field, Albanian leader satisfies his need for high reputation. Albanian leaders and followers also accept inequalities in the distribution of power. This is why legitimate power is

<table>
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<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4.864</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction*</td>
<td>4.228</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>4.880</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fisher’s Exact Test</td>
<td>4.830</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.028</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>4.830</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.028</td>
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<td>N of Valid Casesa</td>
<td>200</td>
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a. 0 cells (0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 36.50.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table
also among the most frequently leveraged sources of power. The followers use more the power of charisma and expertise, because these power bases derive from the personality traits and knowledge that an individual possesses, and do not depend on variables such as age, hierarchical position, etc. Besides senior positions in the organizational hierarchy, there are other positions that often have access to information, such as secretaries, executive assistants, etc. Access to valuable information produces power because information is a resource that can be exchanged.

The three sources of power Albanian leaders and followers believe will be most important to leverage in the next five years are: the power of expertise, the power of relationships and the power of information. Wisdom has always been power. Information value has notably increased and relationships have a transformative impact on individuals. 50 percent of the survey respondents used contacts to gain something for themselves. Nearly a quarter (30 percent) of respondents used contacts to help others, as for example, finding a job for their friends, helping their peers succeed in their work, helping their subordinates to get the payment of stand-by hours, etc. Only 20 percent of respondents used their contacts, networks, and their relationships to help their company.

How do Albanian leaders and followers behave when power is exercised over them? Individuals in top positions demonstrate resistance when the power is exercised over them, while those in lower hierarchical levels tend to agree. In a culture such as ours with a high power distance, where predominate micro-enterprises and the owner is the director/manager is logical that leaders perceive themselves as holders of power and that only they can use it to influence the behavior of others and to produce the desired results from them. In an organizational culture where the legitimate power is very popular it is expected that the followers accept the power that is exercised over them.

We talked a lot about the power of Albanian leaders and followers but we have not mentioned yet the reasons why followers follow their leaders. In order to give an adequate answer why people follow leaders, we shall try to analyze the basics mindset of followership. Participants in the survey were asked to identify the reasons why individuals choose to follow certain leaders. What was proved by the data processing was that leaders and followers did not agree with each other. 36 percent of the leaders surveyed said that: “they follow because they have faith in us”. This reason was accepted by only 26 percent of the followers surveyed. 30 percent of followers said that: “we are rational beings and have to calculate what we lose and what we gain. If we may lose our job, then it is better to follow”.
CONCLUSIONS

The distribution of power may differ from one organization to another, from one country to another. For this reason we undertook this study of power in the context of our country (Albania). We may conclude that leadership still is a masculine role since that the typical respondent in the category of leaders was a male (54 percent). Typical respondent in the category of followers was a female (59 percent). In fact, such results are not surprising but expected in the reality of Albania. Our national culture has masculine bold shades. Therefore, these results can be attributed to Albanian patriarchal culture that generates injustice against women. According to Hofstede, Albania scores 80 on masculine/feminine dimension (Wohlfahrtstaetter, 2012). There are observed significant gender differences in the workplace; however, there are efforts to change things.

We tested our hypothesis using the chi-square test. We confirmed our first hypothesis: There is practical evidence that there is a notable correlation between power and hierarchical vertical dimension.

In Albanian companies surveyed the distribution of power is unequal. Second Hypothesis: Power is concentrated in the hands of a few select individuals, is confirmed. Leaders have more power than their followers and thus they have more privileges.

There does not exist a general organizational climate that encourages delegation. Concluding this we can say that our third hypothesis is also also confirmed.

Followers agree and accept when power is exercised over them. Followers comply with directives without putting them into question. They think that they gain more from obedience than resistance. According to them a smart person should do a cost benefit analysis of followership.

In Albania leaders do not use just one base of power but they combine different bases. Leaders mostly use the power of expertise, legitimate power, the power of charisma, and the power of relationships. Followers mostly use the power of charisma, the power of expertise, and the power of information. We can not say if the usage of these bases is either wrong or right because we consider that there is no universal best way to influence people. There are no available recipes. Power bases are influenced by situational variables. Culture is one of those variables. We suggest that top management must provide to leaders opportunities to improve power sources.

To upcoming researches we suggest: to expand the sampling that we used in order to generate more accurate results; and to undertake surveys in more companies, in various industries, in order to avoid the influence of the uniqueness of organizational culture of a particular industry. In order to study the power in more dimensions we suggest other researchers to conduct a similar survey for political leaders and their followers.
REFERENCES